

What Does That Word Mean?

***abandon**—To give up knowingly a right in someone or something with no plan to take it back. For example, in North Carolina one way of abandoning one's child would be to have no contact with the child and not support him or her for six months or more.

abortion—When a fetus leaves a woman's body before it can live on its own. An abortion that occurs naturally is also called a miscarriage. A planned abortion is sometimes called "induced abortion" or, more often, just "abortion." A woman who decides to end a pregnancy takes pills (medical abortion) or has an operation (surgical abortion).

abuse—Harmful treatment.

appeal—To ask a court to look over what a lower court decided and reach a different conclusion.

birth control—This term has two meanings. It can mean planning how many children you will have. It can also mean medicines or other methods you can use to avoid unwanted pregnancy. Another name for birth control is "family planning."

contempt of court—Disobeying a court's rules or showing disrespect. Judges can penalize people for contempt of court, including by putting them in jail.

custody—Responsibility for the care and supervision of a child.

dependency—The need to rely on someone else for life's necessities.

designated relinquishment—A parent's surrender of a child to an agency so that the child can be adopted by a specific person or family.

domestic violence—Violence that someone you have or had a personal relationship with does to you or to someone who is or was in your family or household.

DSS—A local department of social services. Every North Carolina county has one.

emancipation—Freeing a child from parents' control.

expel—The word has two meanings in this book. 1. To force something from the space it was occupying, as when a fetus is expelled from a woman's womb. 2. To take away a person's right to be part of an activity such as school.

fetus—A developing human between the end of the eighth week of pregnancy and birth. (See **abortion** in this list.)

guardian ad litem—An adult whom a judge asks to help a minor through a court procedure.